

# FAQ for Common Core / SBAC Field Test

Senator Carol Liu's Common Core Implementation/Teacher Support Systems Roundtable has been meeting since October 2013 with education leaders from across the Los Angeles area. <http://sd25.senate.ca.gov/education/common-core> The January Roundtable meeting featured Joe Willhoft, Executive Director of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, which is directing the assessment systems for over 20 states including California. The following FAQ is based on the questions from our Roundtable participants via online survey, Roundtable break out groups, and meeting evaluation questions. The many questions from the group were synthesized into a list of frequently asked questions. The answers in this document come from information provided by the LA County Office of Education and the California Department of Education. We hope this FAQ based on the top questions from practitioners in the field is helpful in developing local implementation plans and communications strategies.

## Responses to Questions from Senator Carol Liu's Common Core Roundtable

### **1. When will the interim assessments be available? How will scores be communicated? How much will they cost? What trainings will be available?**

Smarter Balanced has provided an in-depth description of the interim assessments in their November/December **2013 Smarter News** newsletter available on the Smarter Balanced Web page at <http://smarterbalancedcreatesend1.com/t/ViewEmail/r/CE67B3DA67089DFE2540EF23F30FEDED>. The first set of interim comprehensive assessments are expected to be available by fall 2014. For California educators, there will be no cost to access the Smarter Balanced interim assessment system. While details about training to support the use of the interim assessment system have not yet been made available, it is anticipated that training will be available and announced as it is released. In addition, information about the scoring and reporting of the results from the interim assessment system will be communicated as soon as it is available.

### **2. How will the cut scores on the Smarter Balanced assessments be connected to the Academic Performance Index (API)? When will there be more information?**

The determination of cut scores will be a part of a rigorous standard-setting process. Data collected following the administration of the Field Test will be critical to the standard-setting process and will be used to finalize achievement levels and develop reporting criteria. Results of the standard setting process will be available in 2014–15. Due to 2013–14 being a Smarter Balanced Field Test year, results will not be available for accountability. Further, the calculation of the API based upon Smarter Balanced operational test scores will be forthcoming, as the decisions are made and the information becomes available.

**3. When will more information be available to families about the changes in testing?**

On the California Department of Education (CDE) Smarter Balanced Field Test Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterfieldtest.asp> there is a tab for parents to access information about the Smarter Balanced assessments. Smarter Balanced has a Web page for parents and students at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/>. Local educational agencies (LEAs) are also reaching out and providing parents with this information.

**4. Will the CDE provide blueprints of SBAC summative and/or interim assessments?**

The Smarter Balanced preliminary test blueprints describe the content of the English language arts/literacy and mathematics summative assessments for grades 3–8 and 11—and how that content will be assessed. These blueprints are available at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/>. These blueprints are “preliminary” because they establish assessment design features that may be subject to refinement and revision after the analysis of the Pilot and Field Test results. Since the comprehensive interim assessments will mirror the operational summative assessments, the final blueprints will be applicable to both.

**5. Can districts get further clarification about career recommendations that will be coming out about the Smarter Balanced assessments?**

Smarter Balanced has provided a description of the processes being used to establish and validate the standards for defining college- and career-readiness. These descriptions are available from the Smarter Balanced Frequently Asked Questions Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/resources-events/faqs>, Questions 32, 33, and 34. In addition, Smarter Balanced will soon be posting their Career Readiness Frameworks for public review.

**6. Why are there no summative assessments for students in grades 9 and 10? What should districts use instead to make sure students are on track?**

Federal law does not require that every grade level be assessed. Since the focus of the Common Core State Standards is on preparing students for college and career, the Smarter Balanced states determined grade 11 would serve as an optimal grade level to gauge student performance and progress in terms of college and career readiness.

Additionally, Assembly Bill (AB) 484 calls for the transition to a system of assessments and assessment tools that cover the full breadth and depth of the curriculum and promote the teaching of the full curriculum. This transition will take several years to complete. AB 484 requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to present recommendations for expansion of the testing system by March 2016. While the assessment system does not currently include

the administration of summative assessments in grades 9 and 10, it is conceivable that these grades will be addressed in future years.

Interim assessments and locally developed assessments can be used to track student progress in grades not assessed by the summative test.

**7. What are the Smarter Balanced implications for special populations?  
Who will upload the accommodations?**

Students with disabilities and students who are English learners are expected to participate in the Smarter Balanced Field Test and subsequent operational test. (The only exceptions on the Field Test are for students who participate in the California Alternate Performance Assessment [CAPA], and for the English-language arts test only, English learners who have been attending school in the United States for less than twelve months.) Smarter Balanced has provided the *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*, which describe the planned supports on the Smarter Balanced assessments. This document provides guidance to classroom teachers, English development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel in selecting and implementing supports. More information, including the downloadable guidelines, is available on the CDE Smarter Balanced Accessibility and Accommodations Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/access.asp>

**8. Does the passage of AB 484 affect the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) requirement?** No. The CAHSEE is not addressed in AB 484, so the passage of AB 484 has no impact on the CAHSEE requirement. Unless legislation is introduced and passed changing the existing requirement, LEAs are still required to administer the CAHSEE and it remains a high school graduation requirement.

**9. What is the timeline for the new CELDT?**

The new English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC), which will replace the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), will be operational for the first time in the 2016–17 school year. This is also contingent upon funding and approval by the State Board of Education.

**10. Will there be more state funding for Common Core and SBAC implementation?**

The CDE is committed to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced assessment system. Information regarding funding for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards is available on the CDE Common Core State Standards Implementation FAQ located at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/ca/commoncorefaq.asp>

In terms of the funding for assessments, AB 484 authorizes the funding of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). It is

expected that as long as this legislation is in place, the funding of the statewide assessment system will continue.

**11. Will districts be able to give feedback on the testing window format?**

Establishing testing windows, including the lengths of these windows, takes into consideration many factors, including the reliability, validity, and comparability of the results; other concurrent testing demands; as well as input from a range of stakeholders including administrators and teachers. The CAASPP testing windows will be part of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). Once the proposed testing window regulations are made available for public comment, schools and districts will have an opportunity to provide input about the windows.

**12. What is the timetable for Smarter Balanced implementation?**

The field test will be administered in the 2013–14 academic year and the operational test will be administered beginning with the 2014–15 academic year.

**13. Will there be more test administration workshops?**

The schedule for a fixed number of ETS Field Test administration workshops is set and announced in advance. If one could not register and attend, an archive of this workshop is available for viewing on the California Technical Assistance (CalTAC) Web site at <http://californiatac.org/index.html>. A new round of test administration workshops will be held next year. One may also contact their local county office of education or school district to determine other trainings that are available to prepare for the Field Test.

**14. What are some recommended strategies to support digital literacy for teachers and students?**

- A variety of tools to support digital literacy are provided at the Brokers of Expertise Web site at <http://www.myboe.org> (search for **digital literacy**).
- The Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests provide opportunities for students to experience a variety of item types and to apply **digital literacy** skills. The Practice Tests are located on the CDE Smarter Balanced Practice Test Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>.
- County offices of education and local school districts also provide a variety of resources and strategies designed to support digital literacy.